

NEW REPUBLIC

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Noteworthy This Week

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Defense or Dodge

WHEN PRESIDENT EISENHOWER took over the White House three major reports lay on the top of his desk. All three were drawn up by experts; all recommended a large-scale civil and continental air-defense program.

Eisenhower postponed any decision, appointing his own commission under an old friend, Maj.-Gen. Harold Bull. Now General Bull, backed up by the President's scientific advisers, has endorsed the earlier reports and recommended a program costing \$6 billion a year for the next six years. For this sum, experts believe significant protection can be achieved.

Meanwhile the Eisenhower Administration has committed the Republican Party and the nation to two utterly opposed courses of action; a reduction of the Air Force share in the military budget and economy that calls for budget and tax cuts and no increase in the national debt.

Eisenhower can choose air defense and economy by expanding the Air Force at the expense of the Army and Navy; he can choose air defense and protect the Army and Navy by abandoning the economy drive. Or he can further delay the air-defense program. Scientists fear that he will choose the third which appears to be the easiest course. Their fear is heightened by the Administration's recent political maneuver in cutting the Air Force back by \$750 million and 965 planes in order to preserve the ceiling on the national debt.

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